

CDM's "Something Rotten" is Anything But Rotten

written by Emma van Heeringen, a senior at Laguna Hills High School. April 2, 2022

A singing omelet and William Shakespeare share the stage at Corona Del Mar High School's production of "Something Rotten". In this meta farce comedy, the Bottom brothers must come up with a plan to put on a play better than Shakespeare's. Their solution: a musical.

Nick and Nigel Bottom, played by AJ Plumb and Jackson Jaha- Anderson, are the perfect foils. Plumb's pessimism as Nick Bottom is shown through his exaggerated facial expressions while ranting about his hate for Shakespeare, contrasting Jaha-Anderson's capitalization of the male-ingenue role of Nigel. With a soft vocal tone and multiple dramatic runs off stage, Jaha-Anderson demonstrates the heart-of-gold nature of his character.

Savannah Harper skillfully plays Bea Bottom with a strong belt and dramatic mood swings to emphasize her feminist characteristics. Harper nonchalantly picks up a huge block of wood, carries a bucket of feces, and dresses up as a man to show her love and support for Nick Bottom.

Portia, played by Alaina Gauss, speaks in a high-pitched, sing-songy rhythm while bonding with Nigel over her love for Shakespeare. Gauss contrasts Portia's Puritan roots by flailing her arms and feet as she gets drunk in front of her idol. Portia's free-spirited character is reprimanded by Thomas Eastmond's portrayal of Brother Jeremiah, who assertively struts down the stage while telling homoerotic jokes.

Sean Carroll Jr. commands the stage as William Shakespeare. Carroll Jr.'s comedic timing shines as he tap dances in iambic pentameter and stands with his hands on his hips and feet planted solidly on the stage. Through a strong physicality, it is clear that Shakespeare adores the acclaim.

The lighting design team skillfully nods to the musical theatre allusions in the production's references to *Rent*, *Les Miserables*, and *Chicago* are all made clear through the iconic lighting choices. The bright color palette for the show is reflective of the new ideas of the Renaissance and the camp nature of the show.

Additionally, the costume crew's use of long peasant dresses and blouses allows for a fusion of Renaissance and modern culture, a running theme throughout the production. The choice to dress Portia and Brother Jeremiah in all black accentuates the ironic value of their characters.

Through strong actors and technicians, Corona Del Mar High School welcomes the audience to the Renaissance.